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ABSTRACT

This paper contains an overview and suggested competencies for a competency-based life skills training program for adults with special needs. The goal of the program is to provide a meaningful, high quality education and training program for adults with special needs that will lead to mastery of the life skills needed to maximize independence, responsibility, community integration, employability, and quality of life. The guide discusses curriculum, training, focus, program characteristics, program planning, and student outcomes. Following a matrix that shows the relationship between the life skills curriculum and the adult special education curriculum, the guide lists the competencies needed by adults with special needs in the areas of domestic duties, vocational requirements, recreation/leisure activities, community resources, consumer economics, and government. Checklists of suggested training activities/curriculum that can be used as planning sheets for the program are provided. (KC)

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COMPETENCY - BASED

LIFE SKILLS

TRAINING

for

ADULTS with SPECIAL NEEDS

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Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System Consortium, and the San Diego Community College District Foundation 1987

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COMPETENCY-BASED ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION

In a Competency-Based approach, the emphasis is placed on the "competencies" or "skills" which a person needs in order to function as competently and successfully as possible in his/her "world".

In Adult Special Education programs, the approach is basically the same, i.e., what specific skills are needed, by this particular group of adults with disabilities, in order to:

1) take better care of their personal lives
2) be gainfully employed, or, improve work skills/options
3) integrate into the community and use community resources.

Therefore, our GOAL, in a Competency-Based Adult Special Education Program, is

TO PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL, QUALITY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
WHICH WILL LEAD TO
MASTERY OF THE CRITICAL AND FUNCTINAL LIFE SKILLS
NEEDED BY THE INDIVIDUAL

TO

MAXIMIZE:

- INDEPENDENCE
- RESPONSIBILITY
- COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
- EMPLOYABILITY
- QUALITY OF LIFE

LIFE SKILLS

CURRICULUM

The Live Skills Curriculum is a framework for organizing those critical and functional skills which are needed, by all individuals, in order to perform successfully in life's normal flow of activities.

The grouping of these skills into the different curriculum areas is basically an outgrowth of following a person through the day and listing all the skills needed during a specific period of the day - as shown below:

What are the FUNCTIONAL SKILLS needed for an ADULT DAY
1. Getting Started (Self-Care Skills)
2. Domestic (Home Skills)
3. Work (Vocation Related Skills)
4. After Work:
- Leisure/Recreation Skills
- Consumer Economics
- Community Resources
5. Dinner & Evening Activities
- Domestic and Social Skills
- Leisure/Recreation
6. Closing Down (Self-Care Skills

TRAINING

Life Skills Training is a process which leads to the acquisition of skills needed by an individual to function as independently as possible in society. The philosophy supporting life skills programming for individuals with disabilities is that all individuals are entitled to training/education designed to maximize independence and competence in those life skills needed for successful performance in life situations.

In the Life Skills Training Model groups of related skills are organized into the following Curriculum or Training areas:

- Domestic
  - Self-Care, Health, Hygiene
  - Home, Family Life
- Vocational
- Recreation/Leisure
- Community Resources
- Consumer Economics
- Government and Law

FOCUS

The focus of the Adult Life Skills training program is indicated by the three words as shown below:

ADULT -
- Chronologically Age-Appropriate
  - Activities
  - Materials
  - Equipment
- Mature and "Normal" (not "handicapped" activities, etc.)

LIFE - (Real World)
- Critical
- Functional
- Practical
- Normal flow of life's activities

SKILLS -
- for Quality of Life
- to take better care of oneself
- to get a job - or a better job
- to access and use community resources
- to be a better shopper & consumer
- to be a better citizen (voting, etc.)
- to be a contributing member of society

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

There are a number of characteristics that are essential to a life skills training program.

- Training is based on the individual's present needs;
- Training requires appropriate & targeted assessments;
- Training focuses on the individual's future needs, placement, and life
- Training emphasizes skill acquisition - not only cognition;
- Training is targeted towards developing the individual's independence and responsibility;
- Training plans are individualized;
- Training progress is monitored and progress shared with students.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Good planning for students is based on good assessments. The assessment results, in turn, must be shared with the student and significant others. With increasing frequency, the student must be involved in and share the responsibility for designing his/her program. Responsibility is not learned by doing things for a person, but only when the individual begins to take some ownership for himself and the training plan.

In order to plan a program targeted to an individual's needs, the following information is needed:

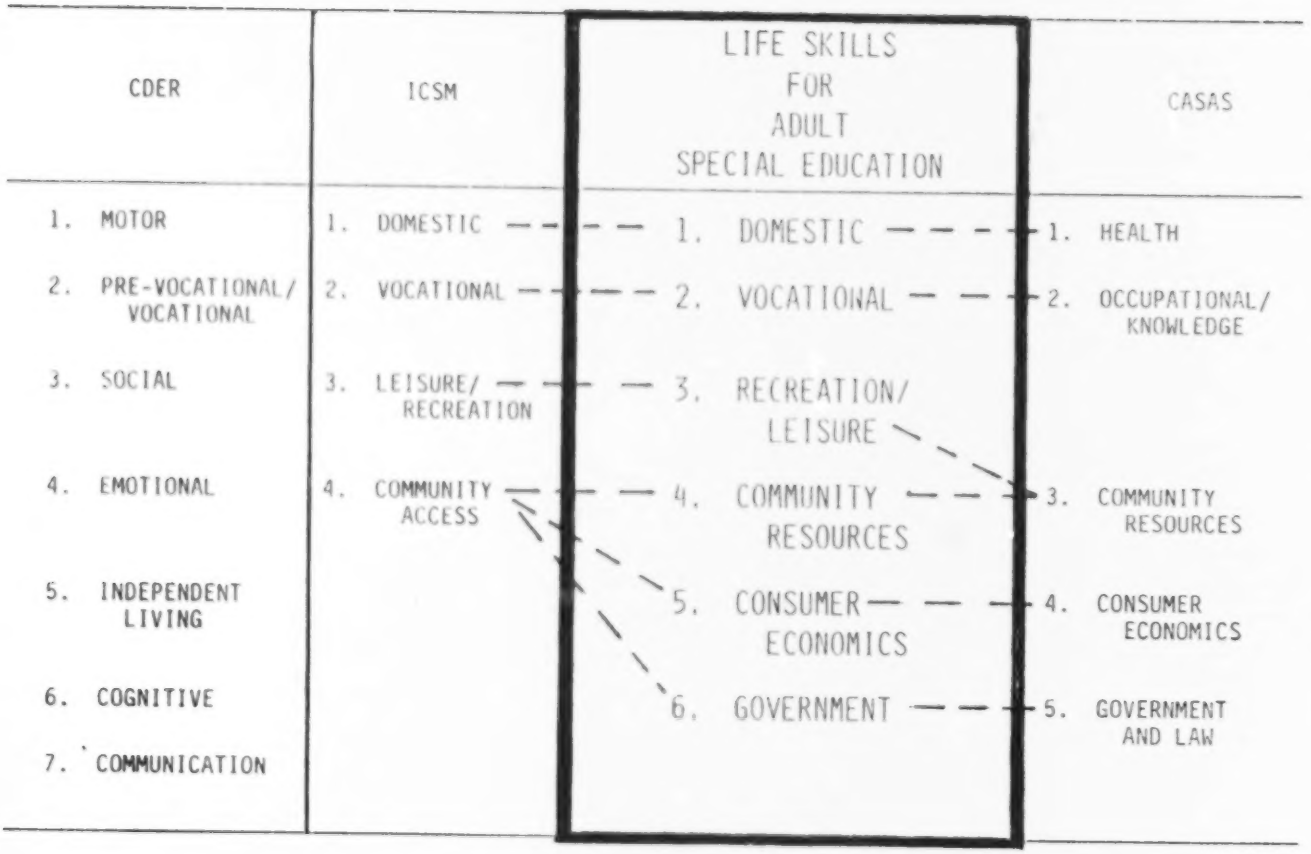
- skills the individual already has
- environment in which the individual currently resides
- environment in which the student is likely to reside next
- student-stated training/education, desires/needs
- age
- parental/significant-others' expectations
- student's expectations/interests for the future
- student's learning style and preferences
- student's observed or reported learning problems
- extreme or hard to manage behaviors.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Life skills training leads to individual maturity, independence and responsibility. An individualized plan is developed for each student so that the student's achievement can be easily monitored and so that the "bridge" can be built to transition the individual from a life that is fully supported by others to a life that requires less and less support and supervision. In the LifeSkills Model the student receives feedback, positively and frequently, and is encouraged to take more and more responsibility for his learning and his life - to be a more responsible member of his family and his community.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND DEVELOPMENT OF

THE LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION



CDER: Client Development and Evaluation Report (administered to all Developmentally Disabled annually in California)

ICSM: Individual Critical Skills Model - Developed for Severely and Profoundly Retarded/Disabled Students

CASAS: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System

LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM

Adult Special Education

	CASAS COMPETENCY NUMBERS	
DOMESTIC * SELF-CARE/GROOMING * HEALTH AND HYGIENE * HOME SKILLS	3.0 & 8.0	
VOCATIONAL * WORK SKILLS TRAINING * CAREER INFO. AND JOB APPLICATIONS * JOB-RELATED BEHAVIORS * ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING	4.0	
RECREATION/LEISURE * HOBBIES * CREATIVE ARTS * SPORT/RECREATIONAL GAMES * SPECTATOR ACTIVITIES * P.E. AND FITNESS	2.6	
COMMUNITY RESOURCES * TELEPHONE * TRANSPORTATION * POST OFFICE * SCHOOL * LIBRARIES * RECREATIONAL CENTERS * MEDICAL FACILITIES	2.0	
CONSUMER ECONOMICS * MONEY HANDLING * MONEY MANAGEMENT * PRODUCT VALUE, ETC. * BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES * CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS	1.0 & 6.0	
GOVERNMENT * PUBLIC OFFICE * CURRENT EVENTS * CITIZENSHIP * VOTING	5.0	

DOMESTIC

	AAAAA	AAAA	AAA	AA
Self-Care				
Personal				
Bathing				
Grooming				
Dressing				
Hygiene				
Health				
First Aid				
Dining				
Clothing Care				
Home Skills				
Food Preparation, etc.				
Table Setting				
Dishwashing				
Serving				
Food Preparation				
Menus				
Shopping				
Nutrition				
Housekeeping				
Sweeping				
Mopping				
Dusting				
Trash				
Window Cleaning				
Laundry				
Bed making				
Yard Work				
Sweeping Walks				
Raking				
Gardening				
Watering				
Mowing - Hand				
Mowing - Power				
Trash				

The following pages with the lists of suggested training activities/curriculum can be used as check lists or planning sheets to identify training activities for:

- facility
- classes
- individuals

by using the following codes:

NA - Not appropriate

I - Introduce

E - Extensive instruction

R - Review and refine

VOCATIONAL

	AAAAA (5A)	AAAA (4A)	AAA (3A)	AA
A. Work Skills Training				
1. Skill Development				
Discrimination				
Assembly				
Sequencing				
Sorting				
Packaging				
2. Behaviors				
Follows Directions				
Asks For Help				
Signal When Finished				
B. Work-Related Behaviors				
On Time				
On Task				
Breaks				
Transportation				
Rest Rooms				
Pay Procedures				
C. Career Information				
Interest Inventory				
Job Pre-requisites				
Visits				
Resource People				
D. Job Search				
Newspaper Ads, Phone Bk, etc.,				
Personal Contacts				
Applications				
Interviews				
Transportation				

RECREATION - LEISURE

- Being Entertained
- Participating in Games
- Participating in Sports
- Working on Hobbies, Collections, Etc.
- Expressive Arts (Music, Drama, Painting, Art)

	PASSIVE	GAMES/ACTIVITIES	SPORTS	AAAAA	AAAA	AAA	AA
INDIVIDUAL	Books	Card Games	Walking				
	Magazines	Hobbies	Hiking				
	Music Listening	Collections	Shooting Baskets				
	Arts & Crafts	Video Games	Swimming				
	Video Games	Table Games	Exercises				
	Radio	Classes	Golf				
	T.V.	Window Shopping	Weight Lifting				
	Movies		Special Olympics				
	Painting		Bicycling				
	Spectator Sports						
	Classes						
PARTNER	Listening	Cards	Walking				
	Concerts	Chess	Hiking				
	Spectator Sports	Pool	Basketball				
	Arts & Crafts	Window Shopping	Horse Shoes				
	T.V.	Video Games	Dancing				
		Table Games	Tennis/Racquet Ball				
		- Password	Badminton				
		- Scrabble	Special Olympics				
		Frisbee	Shuffleboard				
		Music/Drama Performance	Bicycling				
		Classes					
GROUP	Concerts	Table/Party Games	Ball Games				
	Spectator Sports	- Bingo	Walking & Hiking				
	T.V.	- Password	Soccer				
	Movies	- Scrabble	Track & Field				
	Singing	Cards	Bowling & Lawn Bowling				
		Bingo	Aerobics				
		Pool	Dancing				
		Performances	Special Olympics				
		Classes					

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- What is Available
- How to Access It
- Appropriate Use
- Appropriate Behaviors

	AAAAA	AAAA	AAA	AA
Telephone				
Transportation				
Post Office				
Schools				
Libraries				
Medical Facilities				
Recreation Centers				
Pools				
Movies				
Parks				
Senior Citizen Centers				
Activity/Drop-In Centers				
Churches				

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

*** Safety Measures/Precautions

*** Asking for Help/Assistance/Directions

CONSUMER ECONOMICS

	AAAAA	AAAA	AAA	AA
A. Number Recognition				
Quantities				
Money				
B. Number Values				
Quantities				
Money				
C. Money Handling				
Paying				
Counting Money				
Figuring Prices				
D. Money Management				
Budgeting				
Banking				
Savings				
E. Purchasing				
Product Value				
Quantity vs. Quality				
Best Buys				
Seasonal				
Sales				
Major Purchases/Credit Buying				
F. Care & Maintenance of Personal Property				
Product Life				
Doing Simple Repairs & Maintenance				
Arranging for major Repair & Maintenance				
- Home				
- Car				

GOVERNMENT

	AAAAA	AAAA	AAA	AA
1. Current Events				
- local				
- state				
- national				
- world				
2. Responsibilities of a Good Citizen				
- interpersonal & social behaviors				
- community responsibilities				
3. Elected Officials				
- national				
- state				
- local				
4. Voting Skills and Respsibilities				
5. Government and Civil Servants - Local, State, National				
Police				
Fire Department				
Welfare Department (Social Services)				
Social Worker				
Social Security Office				
SSI Funding				
Department of Rehabilitation				
Employment Office (E.E.O.)				
Taxes				
IRS				